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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 WELLINGTON 000666

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STATE FOR S/WCI - AMBASSADOR PROSPER, EAP/FO, AND EAP/ANP  
NSC FOR VICTOR CHA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/30/2015

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SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR RESETTLEMENT ASSISTANCE OF CERTAIN  
DETAINEES FROM GUANTANAMO

REF: SECSTATE 158272

Classified By: ACTING DCM KATHERINE B. HADDA,  
FOR REASONS 1.4(B) AND (D).

This message contains an action request, at paras 1 and 7.

1. (C) Summary: New Zealand is willing to consider taking in Uigher refugees from Guantanamo, but would at a minimum need a request from the UNHCR to start the process. Both Minister of Foreign Affairs Goff and Immigration Minister Swain will make the final decision of whether to admit the Uighers. Please advise post if and when UNHCR would be willing to make the request. End Summary.

2. (C) Acting DCM raised the U.S. request with Simon Murdoch, CEO of New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (FYI: The CEO is the highest civil servant in the Ministry.) Murdoch said that he would urge relevant officials to give the request full consideration, but cautioned that there were many strikes against it: New Zealand generally only takes refugees at the UNHCR's request, and has already exceeded its UNHCR quota for 2005 and 2006. In addition, New Zealand has no Uigher community, and government policy is to give priority to those refugees who can draw from existing communities for support as they adjust to NZ life.

3. (C) Acting DCM thanked Murdoch for his consideration of the request and told him that we have already been working with UNHCR and others. She said that New Zealand is an open society with a long history of taking in refugees and other immigrants, as well as tolerance towards these groups. For this reason, we rank New Zealand high on the list of potential homes for the refugees. We also consider significant New Zealand's well-assimilated, multinational Muslim community, which might be willing to help the refugees. ADCM acknowledged that there are no Uighers in New Zealand, but said that depending on the background of individual refugees, it may also be possible that some members of New Zealand's large Chinese population could help them settle into life here. She repeated Washington's offer to provide more detailed background on the detainees if helpful. (Comment: New Zealand's pre-war Chinese and sizable Taiwan communities are among those Chinese-speaking New Zealanders who are not particularly pro-PRC and therefore possibly able/willing to help. End Comment.)

4. (C) Acting DCM also made the request to Mary Anne Thompson, Workforce Deputy Secretary at the Department of Labour. (FYI: Thompson, a former member of PM Clark's staff, is an influential player on NZ immigration matters.) Thompson said that she would recommend to the Prime Minister's Department and others that GNZ should keep an open mind about the request. She said that a letter from UNHCR supporting the request would be "most helpful," as more and more it is GNZ's emphasis to only admit UNHCR-sponsored refugees. She said that if and when GNZ received such a letter, they would look at the individual potential refugees and their circumstances. GNZ would also want to send people to interview the detainees, to determine whether they would be willing/able to contribute to NZ society over time, and whether they could be a security risk. In the meantime, Thompson said, she would quietly advise staff working on refugee matters that a UNHCR request "may be coming." Given the sensitivity of the issue, she asked that we keep it confidential. ADCM assured her that we would, as we have

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similar concerns.

5. (C) Thompson also noted that NZ preference is to admit refugees from groups with existing communities here, but took on board ADCM's suggestion that some Chinese New Zealanders and Muslim New Zealanders may be able to help. Thompson also noted that if GNZ decided to take in any of the detainees, it would rather take in a group of them (i.e., "10 to 12") rather than one or two. This would make assimilation easier, she said. GNZ would also admit the refugees' families, as appropriate.

6. (C) Comment: GNZ is negotiating a free trade agreement

with China and is pursuing close relations with the Chinese on many levels. That being said, they continue to draw the line against direct or indirect support for China's human rights violations. Although clearly cautious, GNZ officials may well be willing to consider taking in the Uighers if we continue to take a quietly, quietly approach as well as work through the UNHCR on the request. End Comment.

17. (C) Action Request: Please advise whether and when it would be possible for UNHCR to make a formal request for GNZ to consider taking in some of the Uigher detainees.  
Burnett